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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 ACDA-12 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /094 W
----------050949 150442Z /62
R 141039Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8249
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
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C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 01748

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, MT, IT, FR
SUBJECT: JOINT TALKS ON MALTA NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE

REFS: (A) PARIS 18362 (DTG 081716Z JUN 78),
- (B) PARIS 17993 (DTG 061746Z JUN 78),
- (C) VALLETTA 01586 (DTG 021314Z JUN 78)
- (D) ROME 9839 (DTG 261735Z MAY 78)

1. WE HAVE READ WITH INTEREST EMBASSY PARIS REPORTING ON THE FRENCH, ITALIAN, AND MALTESE TALKS ON THE TWO TEXTS CONCERNING MALTA'S PROPOSED NEUTRALITY. WE ARE, HOWEVER, UNCLEAR ABOUT ONE POINT; NAMELY, ACCESS TO MALTA DRYDOCKS BY MILITARY VESSELS BELONGING TO LARGE MILITARY ALLIANCES. THE COMMENT PORTION OF PARA 12
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REF B STATES THAT THE LANGUAGE IN THE PROPOSED TEXT (PARA 2E OF THE TEXT) DOES NOT "EXCLUDE" SOVIET OR BLOC MILITARY VESSELS WHICH, WE PRESUME, MEANS FROM THE DRYDOCKS (AS OPPOSED TO PORT VISITS). THIS IS CONTRARY TO OUR UNDERSTANDING FROM THE ITALIAN EMBASSY HERE AND OUR OWN READING OF THAT PARAGRAPH, WHICH SEEMS TO US UNAMBIGUOUS, I.E. USE OF THE SHIPYARDS OF

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THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA WILL BE DENIED TO THE MILITARY VESSELS OF ALL COUNTRIES ADHERING TO LARGE MILITARY ALLIANCSU. WHETHER THEY ARE IN A STATE OF NON-COMBAT OR NOT SEEMS TO US TO BE BESIDE THE POINT. WE BELIEVE THAT THAT REQUIREMENT (STATE OF NON-COMBAT) APPLIES TO MILITARY VESSELS OF COUNTRIES NOT BELONGING TO "LARGE MILITARY ALLIANCES" WHICH WANT TO USE THE DRYDOCKS.

2. SHOULD OUR INTERPRETATION OF THIS POINT BE INCORRECT THERE ARE OBVIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR INTERESTS AND WE, THEREFORE, BELIEVE THAT THIS MATTER SHOULD BE CLARIFIED, PERHAPS BY PARIS OR ROME.

3. MORE FUNDAMENTALLY, WE CONTINUE FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT TO HAVE RESERVATIONS AS TO THE EXTENT TO WHICH WESTERN INTERESTS ARE BEST SERVED BY PRESENT LANGUAGE CONCERNING ACCESS TO DRYDOCKS (REF D). WE ASSUME THE DEPARTMENT CONTINUES TO AGREE WITH US THAT PREFERRED LANGUAGE WOULD BE ONE THAT SPECIFICALLY EXCLUDES ONLY THE US AND THE USSR AS SUPERPOWERS AND NOT THE PRESENT LANGUAGE WHICH EXCLUDES THE UK AND OTHER NATO ALLIES AS WELL AND THUS HAS THE EFFECT OF PERMITTING ACCESS ONLY TO SUCH TYPES AS LIBYA. GIVEN THE FACT THAT THERE ARE STILL SEVERAL UNRESOLVED ISSUES ON WORDING OF THE OVERALL TEXT, WE THEREFORE SUGGEST THE DEPARTMENT TAKE STEPS TO CONVEY OUR INTEREST AND CONCERN AT A LEVEL WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL

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